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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LUANDA 000326

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FOR AF/S

PRETORIA FOR USDA/FAS

STATE PASS USAID FOR AFR/SA (ELOKEN, IMACNAIRN), HCHA/FFP

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USDA FOR FAS/ITP (SHEIKH)

EMBASSY GABORONE FOR USAID (JBROWN)

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SUBJECT: U.S. AND CHINESE AMBASSADORS EXPLORE BILATERAL  
AGRICULTURE ASSISTANCE IN ANGOLA

REF: A. STATE 39116

1B. LUANDA 311

11. (U) Summary. On April 3, 2007, the Chinese and U.S. Ambassadors met to discuss potential areas for coordinated agricultural assistance to Angola. They reviewed their countries, respective engagement in agricultural assistance in Angola in an effort to find synergies for future cooperation. The Ambassadors agreed to identify a small, well-focused project with meaningful contributions from each country, and acceptable to the GRA. Chinese agricultural aid to Angola has been limited, until now, to visits by experts and gifts of agricultural machinery, training and tools. End Summary.

12. (U) On April 3, 2007, Ambassador Efird met with Chinese Ambassador to Angola Zhang Beisan at his residence to discuss potential areas of cooperation to assist Angola's agricultural sector. The meeting followed informal discussions the week of March 27 at social events. During those encounters the Chinese Ambassador confirmed that he had received reports from Beijing on the U.S. suggestion for agricultural bilateral cooperation in Angola. Besides Ambassador Zhang, the Chinese Economic-Commercial Counselor and a translator attended the meeting. USAID Deputy General Development Officer, Economic-Commercial Assistant and Econ-Commercial officer (notetaker) joined the Ambassador at the Chinese Residence.

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U.S. Agricultural Assistance Programs  
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13. (U) USAID Deputy General Development Officer briefly introduced USAID's programs in Angola, explaining that USAID implements its projects through NGOs, private corporations, or universities. A USD 1 million per annum agricultural development and finance program is currently exploring marketing of bananas, potatoes, vegetables and coffee. The first banana project was launched this year, and market research on potatoes has begun. Work on vegetables and coffee will follow. Aidoff mentioned a number of areas where China might be able to offer valuable assistance, such as providing agronomists, advice on crops adapted to humidity and heat, irrigation, and providing agricultural equipment. Embassy also gave Zhang copies of Embassy-drafted papers suggesting potential areas for coordinated work. Zhang said he and his staff would study the papers.

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Chinese Agricultural Aid to Angola

14. (SBU) Ambassador Zhang told us that China's aid to Angola, up until now, has been limited to sending agricultural tools and machinery, several visits by agricultural experts who have studied the agricultural potential of various provinces, and providing training for employees in the Ministry of Agriculture. Angolans do not have a highly-developed agricultural economy and that complicates Chinese efforts to extend assistance, Zhang continued. Efird concurred, suggesting that Angola fell 30 years behind during its civil war. She said that during her recent meeting with Minister of Agriculture Afonso Pedro Canga (Reftel B), they identified Angola's global agricultural challenges as: commercialization of agriculture; seed production; increased use of fertilizer, and demining, in order to make more land available for agriculture.

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Finding a Project

15. (U) Ambassador Zhang proposed that the two embassies together identify a project and hoped that a successful bilateral project in Angola might serve as a model for U.S.-Chinese cooperation in other parts of Africa. Both ambassadors agreed that they should start with a small, well-focused project with meaningful participation from both nations, especially because funding issues have yet to be addressed. Ambassador Efird envisioned a Chinese-American project jointly presented to the GRA for its buy-in.

16. (U) Ambassador Efird also referenced the fact that the

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petroleum companies working in Angola carry-out social responsibility programs, and cited the work that a few of the US petroleum giants already conduct in the field of agriculture. She suggested that another possibility for US-Chinese cooperation would be for one of USAID's corporate partners to design a project jointly with Chinese oil company Sinopec. The two corporations could then jointly present their project to the Angolan petroleum parastatal Sonangol for its approval. (Note: Sonangol must review and approve all petroleum company social responsibility projects. End note.) Ambassador Efird also suggested a meeting between Embassy staff and the Chinese agricultural team visiting in April in order to identify areas where both countries can work together. Zhang said he would consider all the suggestions and respond to the Embassy. He said this kind of trilateral cooperation (U.S.-China-Angola) was an innovation but one that could be a model in Africa if successful.

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Comment

17. (SBU) Although Chinese agricultural assistance has been less structured than U.S. assistance, Ambassador Zhang seemed prepared to work with the U.S. side to create a small program suitable for meaningful contributions by both sides. He did not indicate a timetable, although he clearly plans to consult with his MFA before meeting with us again.

EFIRD